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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 NEW DELHI 007937

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SUBJECT: NEPALESE MAOIST SUPREMO PRACHANDA CONQUERS DELHI,  
TOO

Classified By: PolCouns Ted Osius for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Nepal's Maoist Chairman Prachanda made a splashy debut in New Delhi last week, addressing a leadership conference and sharing the stage with world leaders like Afghan President Karzai and former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani. Prachanda criticized Stalin and Lenin, preached "socialist democracy," and denied ties with Indian Maoists and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). He was not permitted to meet with the Indian government, but had an "emotional" visit with Indian Leftists, and overall raised his profile as a politician and potential player on the international scene. That said, he's still a long way from being a Jeffersonian democrat, nor have Indians forgotten the death toll in the villages of Nepal. END SUMMARY.

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LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
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12. (C) Speaking for the first time at an international public forum, Communist Party of Nepal Chairman Prachanda shared the stage at the "Hindustan Times" (HT) Leadership summit on November 18 with Afghan President Karzai, former Mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani, Under Secretary General of the UN Shashi Tharoor, and former UK Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock, with whom he co-presented. Prachanda used the speaking opportunity to question the definition of democracy, calling it an "exportable commodity" being traded for oil.

Though he didn't mention any countries by name, he said most democratic countries have become capitalist monopolies, democratic only in name, with inequalities in the socio-economic base. He claimed with a straight face to favor a "Soviet-style democracy," but said that it had lost its way under Stalin, who had created a "negative situation."

"If Lenin had lived for five more years, things would have been different. In the New Economic Policy, Lenin had admitted that the idea of socialist competition is important for a society to be free," the TELEGRAPH quoted Prachanda as saying. Prachanda went on to say that the Maoist goal is to abolish the monarchical feudal autocracy which has existed in Nepal for the last 250 years to form a socialist democratic party. Drawing on the theme of his session, "Democracy: The Forbidden Fruit or Nectar for Progress?" Prachanda declared that democracy has been a nectar for "money bags and people in power," but a forbidden fruit for the masses. The moderator ended the session by inviting Prachanda to come back someday as the President of Nepal, a sure sign that Prachanda's Delhi debut had been successful in the eyes of the adoring Left in Delhi. The non-JNU crowd, however, was disgusted by such pandering to a man with blood on his hands.

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DISASSOCIATION FROM THE INDIAN MAOISTS  
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13. (C) Splitting doctrinal hairs, Prachanda emphasized the differences between Nepalese Maoists and "regular Communists," according to journalist Bharat Bhushan. "He was critical of Stalin, and said that Marxism would not survive

NEW DELHI 00007937 002 OF 004

without democratization," said Bhushan, who made the point that this strategy showed Prachanda as friendly towards India, the world's largest democracy. On ties between Nepalese Maoists and Naxalites, Prachanda said "(The Indian Maoists) have not evolved ideologically as they should have," according to the "Times of India." Prachanda refuted allegations that the Maoists of India and Nepal are preparing a "Red corridor" from Pashupati to Tirupati, saying, "This is a canard spread by certain religious fundamentalist groups in India who do not want monarchy to end. We have ideological affinities with the Indian Maoists as much as any Left group anywhere in the world, but there is no working relationship," according to the "Times of India."

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LUNCH WITH THE LEFT: A SOCIALIST STEW  
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14. (C) Sudheendra Bhadoria of the left-leaning South Asian Forum for People's Initiative joined a lunch held for Chairman Prachanda and his deputy Baburam Bhattarai on Nov. 19, which was hosted by Left Parliament member and Janata Dal (U) leader Sharad Yadav. Also in attendance were former Prime Ministers VP Singh and IK Gujral, and Congress President Sonia Gandhi's Political Secretary, Ahmad Patel. Bhadoria described Prachanda as "choked with emotion, almost in tears," as he addressed the group in fluent Hindi, saying that he had "never expected such a warm reception," and was moved by the efforts of the group that hosted him. Having taken refuge in India (the basement of JNU, perhaps?) several times during the Maoists ten-year long resistance movement, Prachanda told the group, "In the course of my underground stay here, I developed an emotional bond and ideological relationship with the Indian people, political leaders and the ruling class, but this is the first time that I am getting a chance to meet them. It still seems like a dream." Prachanda met the same day with Nepalese leaders residing in India, and reportedly assured them that the peace accord with the Seven Party Alliance would be signed on Nov.

121. On the decommissioning of arms, Bhadoria was of the opinion that the Maoists would welcome India's and the UN's involvement in arms management, and that the Maoists know the "limits of shaping the life of a nation through the jungle.

They want power through government." In a meeting with the "Nepal Democracy Solidarity Committee" at the office of Nationalist Communist Party Spokesperson Devi Prasad Tripathi, Prachanda offended Leftists, according to Bhadoria, when he asked, "What do they (Leftists) have to offer?" The Indian Left was "very unhappy" with that statement, Bhadoria said, especially because they "thought they had played a role" in the Maoists' success in Nepal.

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NO OFFICIAL VISITS, THANK GOODNESS  
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15. (C) Bhadoria indicated that his "sources" had approached External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and PM Singh to negotiate a meeting with Prachanda. Both refused. According to Bhadoria, Prachanda wanted to meet with the two dignitaries in an effort to "better engage" with the Indian

NEW DELHI 00007937 003 OF 004

government and to be acknowledged officially. In an interview in "The Hindu," Mukherjee said he did not meet Prachanda as a matter of "basic principle." The Ministry of External Affairs confirms that no government official met with Prachanda during his visit.

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COUP PLOTTER SCORES PR COUP  
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16. (C) While he stopped short of kissing babies, Prachanda's smile reportedly never faded while he was in New Delhi. General Mehta, a trusted Nepal expert and think-tanker, told PolOff that Prachanda was given an excellent reception here, both politically and publicly. His attendance at the HT Leadership Summit "let India and the international community know that they (Prachanda and Bhattarai) are educated, civilized leaders, perfectly capable of transforming into political leaders," according to Mehta. Bhadoria seconded this opinion, stating that "the world sees now that they are well-read, intelligent people." Bhushan noted that the media had played up Prachanda's and Bhattarai's "good cop, bad cop" routine, in which Bhattarai appeared to play the "Marxist strategist," and Prachanda showed the "more pragmatic" side. Both the Indians and the Maoists had misgivings before Prachanda's visit, Bhadoria said, but the visit had been highly successful at improving the image of the Maoist leaders. "The media response was unprecedented," noted Mehta, adding "the Maoists were able to clear up a lot of confusion about themselves." Mehta went on to say that the Maoists don't agree with the Indians' form of democracy, however, but would invent their own model for democracy in Nepal.

17. (C) In a statement popular with the Indian press, Prachanda said, "We never had any link with them," when asked about possible Maoist-ISI (Pakistani intelligence) cooperation. "At the beginning of our struggle, we were approached indirectly, but we refused to get associated in any way," said Prachanda according to the "Times of India."

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COMMENT: SMART IMAGE MANAGEMENT  
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18. (C) Prachanda's New Delhi tour was a public relations whirlwind that succeeded in raising the Maoist leader's profile as an intelligent, capable leader and potential world player. However, next to the far more eloquent and pro-democracy Neil Kinnick on the stage at the HT Leadership Summit, Prachanda did not give any indication that he is capable of compromising on his version of the truth. While Prachanda is closely identified with the Communists here, he was clearly confident enough to risk alienating his Leftist hosts with his comments. His bid to appear pro-democracy clearly worked in New Delhi, at least with the left-leaning

press. While there is speculation that the question regarding ISI may have been planted, Prachanda's denial of cooperating with the organization is certainly a popular answer in a nation suspicious of Pakistan. The New Delhi establishment seems to have accepted the Maoists as having

NEW DELHI 00007937 004 OF 004

successfully led a "people's revolution," despite the fact that it has been estimated that the Maoist CPN (M) party would only receive about 15% (if that) of the vote. The question of what Prachanda would do if he and his party were not handed charge of the government and/or not given a hand in the next Constitution remains unanswered and unasked in New Delhi, leading us to continue to doubt his democratic convictions. END COMMENT.  
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